



22 July 2014

LPHR public statement on current military offensive on Gaza

As lawyers committed to the protection and advancement of Palestinian human rights, we reiterate our call upon the international community to act decisively to halt the latest resort to sustained military action in the Gaza Strip, following Israel's announcement on 8 July 2014 that they have launched a military operation codenamed Operation Protective Edge. The onset of an Israeli military ground offensive on 17 July 2014 has, as feared, exacerbated the enormous harm to the civilian population of Gaza.

LPHR is gravely concerned by today's report from the Palestinian Center for Human Rights (PCHR) stating that as of 10:00am today, the total number of Palestinian civilian fatalities since the start of Operation Protective Edge is 486, including 151 children and 85 women. Another 3,179 people have been injured, of whom 926 are children and 641 are women. 469 houses have been targeted and destroyed, and hundreds of others have been extensively damaged. At least 117,000 Palestinian civilians have been forcibly displaced, with many seeking shelter in UNRWA schools.

LPHR strongly deplores that PCHR documented 80 Palestinian civilians fatalities, including 22 children and 16 women, in the 24 hour period covering 10:00am yesterday to 10:00am today. LPHR reiterates its extremely serious concern that civilians are being indiscriminately targeted by Israeli military attacks.

LPHR further strongly deplores yesterday's documented attacks on apartment buildings, houses, hospitals, mosques and shelters of displaced person's. This includes an Israeli tanks firing a number of shells at the third floor of al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital. As a result, 3 patients and companions were killed: Khaled 'Awadh Ahmed Bayoumi, 34; 'Alaa' 'Abdul Majid Abu Dahrouj, 17; and Zakaria Ibrahim Shakshak, 29. Another 40 Palestinians were wounded, and the building and a number of ambulances were damaged. This atrocity reinforces LPHR's acute concern at the apparent systematic and deliberate targeting of family homes and civilian facilities in disregard for the protection of civilians.

Due to the apparently systematic and unlawful use of force against civilians and civilian objects causing civilian casualties, LPHR reiterates its urgent call upon the parties to military action, Israeli or Palestinian, to fulfil their binding legal obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law and immediately refrain from the indiscriminate and disproportionate use of force against civilians or civilian objects.

LPHR further urgently calls upon the international community to ensure that credible investigations and full legal accountability is secured for all deaths and injuries caused by unlawful military actions.

LPHR shall continue to closely monitor the current military offensive on Gaza and will make further public statements as and when necessary.